

Andrew Jackson to Samuel Swartwout, January 5, 1827, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

TO THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY (SAMUEL L. SOUTHARD).

Hermitage, January 5, 1827.

Sir. Being informed through a friend that at the table of Mr. John S. Wellford of Fredericksburgh Virginia, the following conversation took place between you and Doctor J. H. Wallace, to wit, you asked Doctor Wallace upon what ground he supported the election of Genl Jackson to the Presidency. With other reasons, the Doctor mentioned my services during the late War, to which you replied, “ that Mr Monroe and not Genl Jackson was entitled to the credit for the victory at New Orleans—that Just before our troops were ordered to New Orleans Genl Jackson left the army and was returning home when Mr. Monroe sent him a preremtory order to return to the defence of that place, and that this, with other energetic measures of Mr Monroe was the salvation of New Orleans. Colo. Gray of that place who was present, asked “ where could that order be found” remarking, that it would be of importance”. Mr Southard said, he did not know, but he had been informed such order was Issued and did exist .

I have thought it my duty, not less to my own character, than to the high and responsible situation which you occupy, to address you stating the facts precisely as they have been communicated to me. A charge of so serious a nature as that implied in your declarations, as stated, to Doctor Wallace, it cannot be expected of me to pass without some notice, especially, as it seems to be adopted as true by an executive branch of our government, and as an act of Justice you cannot be surprised when I demand of you the name of your informer, or the source thro which you have felt yourself warrented in making

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this statement; which I am compelled from principles of truth, to pronounce false and unfounded, and that nothing during my military command ever happened like it, nor can it be said with truth, that I ever left my army, or ever slept one night beyond the limits of my camp, so long as I had one, or that I ever was on the sick report, or asked for leave of absence during the whole time I held a military command.

I have enclosed this letter to my friend Genl Houston, with the request that he present it to you, and enclose your reply, which I have no doubt, you will promptly make.

I have the honor to be very respectfully yr. mo. obdt. servt.